

**Pleurothallis mexiae** Luer, stat. et nom. nov.

Ety.: Named for Ynes Mexia who collected this species.

Syn.: *Pleurothallis chamensis* var. *tenuis* C.Schweinf., Bot. Mus. Leaflet 10: 176, 1942.

Ety.: From the Latin *tenuis*, "thin," referring to the membranous texture of the flowers.

Plant small, epiphytic, densely caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls erect, slender, narrowly triquetrous, 3-6 cm long, with 2-3 thin, tubular sheaths on the lower third and at the base. Leaf erect, thinly coriaceous, ovate, subacute, 3-4.5 cm long, 1.5-2.5 cm wide, with the base rounded, sessile. Inflorescence a congested, simultaneously 2- to 4-flowered raceme, 1.5 cm long including the peduncle ca. 0.5 cm long, erect, along the dorsum of the leaf, subtended a spathe 4-5 mm long, at the base of the leaf; floral bracts thin, 2 mm long; pedicels 2 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; flowers "dark maroon with yellow-tipped petal." sepals glabrous, the dorsal sepal oblong, obtuse, 5.5 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, 3-veined, the lateral sepals connate ca. 3 mm into an elliptical synsepal, 5 mm long, 3.5 mm wide, 6-veined, the apex bifid with the tips acute; petals translucent, oblong-obovate, obtuse, minutely serrate above the middle, 2 mm long, 0.8 mm wide, 1-veined; lip thick, oblong-subtrilobed, 2.5 mm long, 1 mm wide, the apex obtuse, minutely serrulate, the lateral lobes below the middle, erect, broadly rounded, the disc shallowly channelled between a pair of parallel, serrulate calli on the middle third, the base truncate, hinged to the tip of the column-foot; column semiterete, winged, 2 mm long, the foot 1 mm long, the anther, rostellum and stigma ventral.

PERU: Huánuco: Churubamba district, Hda. Mercedes, Cotirarda, alt. 1560 m, 21 Sept. 1936, Ynes Mexia 8215a (Holotype of *P. chamensis* var. *tenuis*: AMES), C. Luer illustr. 18951.

This species is known only from the original collection. It was described as a variety of *P. chamensis*, although the sessile leaf is more like that of *P. casapensis*. Morphologically, the flowers are practically identical to those of either *P. casapensis* or *P. chamensis*, but they were described as being "dark maroon." The flowers of the former species are yellow, yellow-green, or orange. I have seen no collection with dark purple flowers, although both yellow and purple colors occur commonly in many species.

Vegetatively, the two species differ markedly. The densely caespitose ramicauls of *P. mexiae* are slender and narrowly triquetrous while the stout, triquetrous ramicauls of the other two species are produced along a stout, creeping rhizome. The thin leaf of *P. mexiae* is ovate and rounded at the sessile base, similar to the thick leaf of *P. casapensis*, the leaves of which may also be cordate. The leaves of the usually much larger *P. chamensis* are more or less decurrent on the ramicaul.

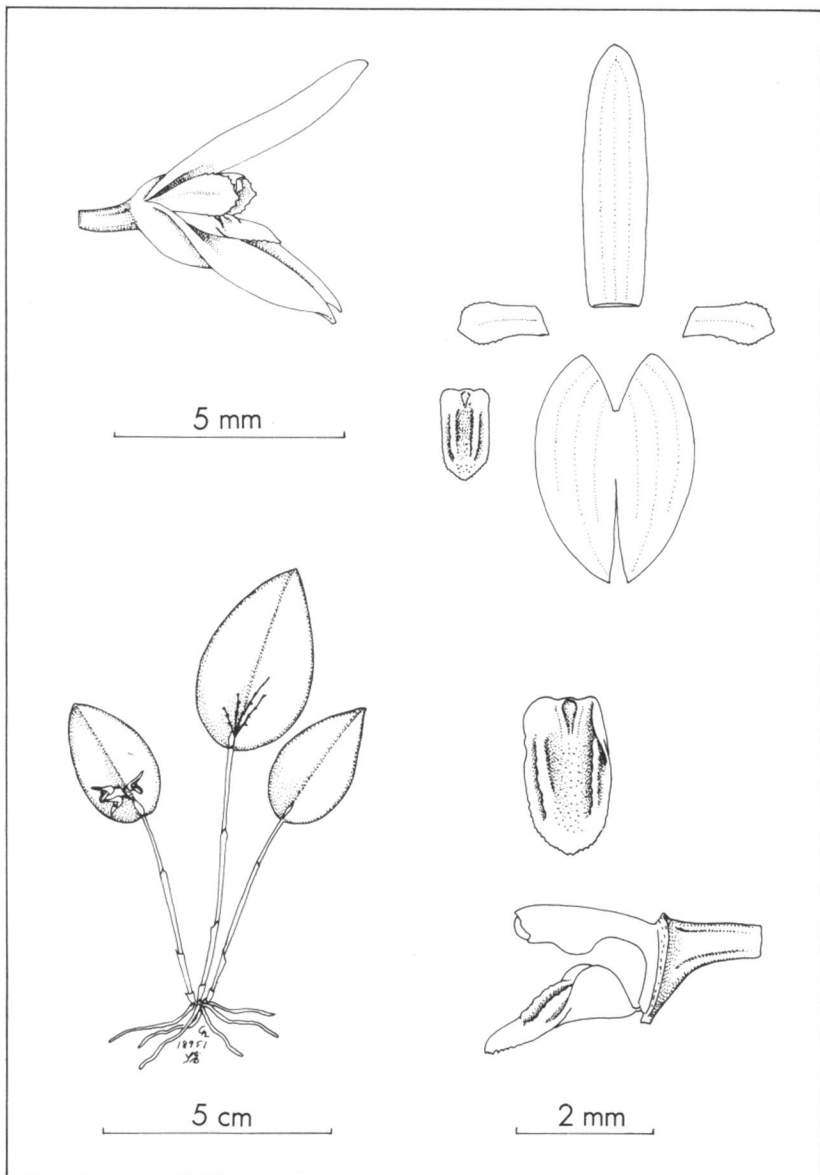


Fig. 28a. *Pleurothallis mexiae*